

# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

## Astbury St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

### Vision

'Walk in love as Christ loves you' Ephesians 5:2

Giving children a foundation to flourish and live fruitful lives. Rooted in the security of love we grow in learning, character and courage to equip us for the great adventure of life. In our Astbury family the first fruits of our character are our values of **self-control**, **peace** and **kindness**. We learn and practise these to support all we seek to do together.

### Strengths

- The Christian vision, with its strong biblical roots, is clearly articulated and understood by the school community. The vision underpins and drives life at every level. It enables pupils and adults to grow and flourish.
- The Christian vision and values are lived out by adults and pupils. As a result, there is a strong support for the wellbeing of all members of the community.
- Driven by the vision, the school has established close links with a range of external partners. These collaborations contribute well to school improvement.
- Worship provides calm and reflective opportunities for personal spiritual growth. Staff and pupils value the time to come together as one in collective worship. Reflections areas in the classrooms support
- worship and personal thriving.
- Pupils demonstrate love for one another and understand that in doing so it enables flourishing.

### Development Points

- Ensure a consistent approach to daily collective worship. This is in order that it reflects the Christian foundation of the school.
- Strengthen the shared understanding and language of spirituality. This is so that pupils and adults can readily articulate their experiences, thereby enriching spiritual growth across the curriculum.
- Embed rigorous assessment procedures throughout the religious education (RE) curriculum. This is to enable staff to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in the subject.



## Inspection Findings

Astbury St Mary's is a small school with a loving heart. Their inclusive Christian vision is understood by leaders, staff, parents and pupils. The nurturing of the community is evident, and pupils and staff show kindness towards one another. Pupils talk about Christ's love for them and demonstrate love to one another. Members of the wider community recognise an Astbury pupil by their kind actions. The trust vision resonates closely with the school as they secure 'life in all its fullness' for pupils. Leaders are passionate in establishing the best possible opportunities for pupils. They ensure that the school's vision shapes and drives school policies. Governors and trust leaders understand their strategic role and are a visible and supportive presence. They monitor and evaluate the impact of the vision, striving to achieve the best outcome for all pupils. The vision is meaningfully lived out through Christian values that are woven through all aspects of the school. There are many opportunities for pupils and staff to reflect, providing valuable moments for spiritual growth. Reflection areas are used regularly. Pupils benefit from these occasions of stillness where they can think and pray within the school day. Staff and pupils are appreciative of each other and there is a sense of belonging for the whole community.

The school's Christian vision inspires the community to love one another. The wellbeing of every member of the school is a high priority and enables adults and pupils to flourish. Leaders understand the challenges to mental health and the impact that this can have on pupil progress. Staff expertise in this area is secure through training. A successful local Christian partnership for wellbeing strengthens support for pupils. As a result, pupils are able to express the importance of valuing themselves and others. They treat each other with respect and demonstrate resilience when faced with challenges. Parents appreciate the way that staff 'go above and beyond' for their children and celebrate the unique nature of each pupil. Staff value being part of a supportive team. They appreciate the close bond formed from working in a small community.

The vision inspired, knowledge rich curriculum has been carefully designed to meet pupils' needs and strengthen learning. The curriculum fosters curiosity and supports pupils to be the best that they can be. This enables pupils considered to be vulnerable, and those with additional needs, to thrive. The wide range of extra-curricular opportunities further enhances flourishing. Activities such as cookery, choir and a range of sports are available for pupils to enjoy. As a result, pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning and the exciting things they do at school. There is a developing approach to spiritual development within the curriculum. Throughout the day, there is scope for spiritual growth, including moments for quiet reflection and appreciating the inspiring local environment. However, a shared language used to describe spiritual experiences is less developed. This limits the ability of adults and pupils to talk in depth about spiritual growth.

The Christian vision is realised as pupils show compassion in practical ways within the local community. Links are strong and the school proactively supports people who are vulnerable within their village. These partnerships help pupils to engage with local social action projects, which inspire them to be champions for change. This work includes litter picking and providing food for the local food bank. Across the school, pupils regularly discuss current issues of inequality and injustice. They advocate for animal rights and actively consider the rights of all to live free of prejudice. Pupils are passionate in promoting the needs of others and actively engage in projects to support others around the globe.

RE has the appropriate status for a Church school. Leaders have ensured that the new RE curriculum is well planned and delivered. This curriculum is challenging, sequenced and relevant. It enables pupils to discuss Christian values, their own values, and the impact they can have on society. Consequently, pupils actively engage in lessons and feel confident expressing their ideas. Impactful training from the diocese and trust enriches the school's provision of a vibrant and engaging curriculum. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding is rich. Pupils speak enthusiastically about RE and have a good understanding of a range of world religions and



worldviews. Pupils see their RE lessons as a safe space to ask big questions and reflect on the answers. A willingness to listen and accept other viewpoints is clear. Pupils' breadth of understanding of Christianity as a global, living faith is developing. Staff provide opportunities for pupils to explore diverse cultures through cross-curricular learning. Engaging teaching allows the pupils to consider a personal response to their learning. While learning about creation, pupils confidently signed a pledge committing to look after the world. Pupils talk proudly about their work and are motivated to make progress. However, robust assessment strategies allowing teachers to track pupil progress over time are underdeveloped.

Collective worship is welcoming and allows everyone to participate. It successfully reflects the school's Christian vision and values. It allows time for quiet reflection and a strong culture of prayer is evident. Pupils and staff enjoy coming together to sing, learn and pray. On some occasions the distinction between a class wellbeing lesson and what counts as worship is sometimes unclear. Leaders plan for a variety of worship experiences. Celebration worship recognises talent from within and outside of school. The 'Walk in Love' award is cherished by pupils and their parents. The church offers a place of stillness and quiet reflection, which is appreciated by staff and parents as they worship there each week. This enriches opportunities for spiritual development. All staff plan and lead worship weekly, which enhances their own spiritual growth. Prayers are said throughout the school day and enhance moments of reflection.

## Information

Address	School Lane, Congleton, CW12 4RG		
Date	9 October 2024	URN	145720
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	91
Diocese	Chester		
MAT	Chester Diocesan Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Philippa Blythe		
Chair of Governors	Kath Moore		
Chair of Trust	Neil Dixon		
Inspector	Anna Brooksbank		